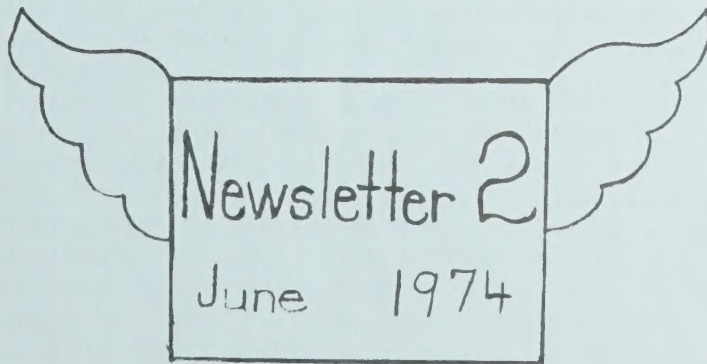
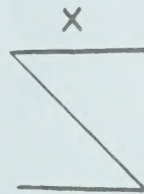
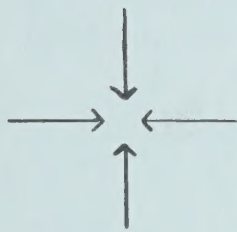


Shirley M. Langton

Symbol Co-ordination Committee



5



SYMBOL CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

Chairman	Barbara Kates	Psychologist, Toronto
Treasurer	Ann Kennedy	Volunteer, Toronto
Secretary	Linda Schwindt	Occupation Therapist, Kitchener
Editor	Barbara Rush	Teacher, Hamilton
Ass't Editor	Lois Valentic	Parent, Hamilton
Workshop		
Convenor	Penny Parnes	Speech Pathologist, Oshawa
Consultant	Oliver Mott	Linguist, Toronto

The purpose of this Newsletter is to publish articles and news items concerning the Bliss Symbol System which utilizes visual symbols to substitute for verbal communication for children without speech.

Subscriptions are \$2.00 and may be obtained by writing direct to:

Mrs. Ann Kennedy, Treasurer
Symbol Co-ordination Committee
c/o 95 Courtleigh Boulevard
Toronto, Ontario, M4R 1K7

Submissions for the Newsletter should be sent direct to:

Mrs. Barbara Rush, Editor
Symbol Co-ordination Committee
c/o 64 Magnolia Drive
Hamilton, Ontario, L9C 5T2

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EDITORIAL

Many thanks for the kind comments received on our first issue. We are glad you found it interesting as well as informative. You'll find more such articles in this issue and we are indeed grateful to those who submitted them.

IMPORTANT NEWS !!!!!

Circle this date, please.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4th, 1974

Your committee plans to hold a Symbol Communication Workshop on Friday, October 4th 1974, at Chedoke Hospital in Hamilton. It will be a one-day workshop from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m., and the registration fee will be \$5.00. If you want to keep up-to-date on symbol methodology, recent research developments, new vocabularies, etc, please plan now to attend. Here is a great opportunity for professionals and parents from different settings to exchange ideas and share mutual problems. This is NOT a workshop for beginners. It is hoped that those attending will have at least a working knowledge of symbols. Registration forms with complete details will be mailed in early September to everyone on our newsletter mailing list. Advance notice of this workshop is included here so that you can make plans now to attend. Please reply promptly to the registration form when received so that we can organize the day according to numbers and areas of interest.

... ..

Your multi-disciplinary committee is now complete with the addition of Penny Farnes, a speech pathologist at Simcoe Hall Crippled Children's Centre in Oshawa. Penny is very familiar with symbols, working with three children at different levels and isolated in separate classrooms. She has taken on the responsibility of Workshop Convenor.

... ..

A booklet entitled "Teaching Guidelines" (which includes a symbol dictionary) is now available at a cost of \$2.00. It can be obtained by writing to:

Symbol Communication Research Project
Ontario Crippled Children's Centre
350 Runsey Road, Toronto, Ontario.

... ..

Another year-end Report will be published by the Symbol Communication Research team this summer. Order forms will be mailed to those who purchased the 1972/73 Report.

... ..

New vocabularies are still available from the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre in Toronto.

Basic 30	\$3.00
100 Vocabulary	4.00
200 Vocabulary	4.50
400 Vocabulary	5.00

... ..

The National Film Board have completed their film and it is now taking shape. It is focussing on the life of Charles Bliss, with some segments on his symbols in use at O.C.C.C. in Toronto and at a school in Montreal. We look forward to its distribution in the summer. We are hoping to obtain a copy to show at our Fall Workshop.

... ..

Ann Kennedy, our Treasurer and a former volunteer at O.C.C.C., has now joined the Research team. She has been appointed "Team Co-ordinator" and any routine mail for symbol information and requests to visit the Toronto Centre should be directed to her.

... ..

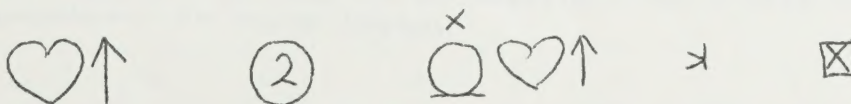
Mr. Bliss was in Canada for six weeks this Spring. He spent most of his time at the Toronto Centre with the Research team and also visited other centres to see his symbols in use. A "Social Evening" was held enabling parents and other interested parties to meet and chat with Mr. Bliss. I must say he is a most remarkable man - his energy and vitality certainly belie his 74 years. He is still working as hard as ever and has plans to publish a Children's text book and a symbol dictionary. We learned with interest that he and Dr. Bruce Chisholm, a Canadian psychiatrist who became the first Director-General of the World Health Organization, have been jointly nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for their contribution towards international peace and understanding.

... ..

Were you able to figure out the symbols on our cover page? This is the symbolic representation of your committee with the literal translation being "Meeting for the purpose of Symbols."

... ..

Our next newsletter will be published in November. Submissions must be received by October 14th, 1974. Don't wait for the deadline - get those articles in NOW. Your committee hopes to see many of you at the workshop and, in the meantime, wishes



Barbara Rush
EDITOR

Since January 1974, two preschoolers have been using Bliss Symbol Boards for communication at our school.

The board is the major means of communication for one little girl, who is nearly 5 years old.

Her speech consists only of vowels and a couple fricatives, voluntary speech is often quite stressful. The Bliss Board should be her major means of communication because intelligible speech development is highly unlikely. She confirms her choice of symbols by indicating with her eye gaze—yes (eyes raised) or-no (eyes lowered).

She currently knows about 41 symbols, which are printed on 2 (38cmx25cm) linked cardboards that fit behind her wheelchair (10'x14')

for easy transport and are handheld by adults who wish to "speak" with her. She points to each symbol by means of a head pointer since she is severely spastic quadriplegic, and we have no access to electrically-run adaptive devices at our centre. She can accurately point to (5cmx5cm) squares on her board without (2in.x2in.)

great effort. She has combined up to 3 symbols in telegraphic sequence in order to describe pictures, immediate surroundings, family activities and her feelings.

The little boy, who is 4 1/2 years old, began speaking the initial sound or syllable of single words 6 months ago. He is using a single board of 20 symbols in his classroom and a duplicate board was recently sent home with his mother. He seems to focus on the printed word, more than the symbol in the unit, so a few of the squares include only words. He points to the symbols with his fingers, as he is not so involved physically. However, his tolerance for use of the board is less than 10 minutes at most. I see his Bliss board is a transition into a word board for the next few years, by which time he should have developed generally intelligible speech. His speech therapy is evenly divided between Bliss sessions and Speech sessions.

Our problem with the boy is his seeming perseverative linking of 5 symbols (mom dad brother home bed) both when he seemed sick and when he seemed well-rested.

To introduce new symbols with these children, I have matched them with pictures of the corresponding object or action. Since the more concrete symbols have been used so far, comparison of the physical characteristics in pictures which match symbols has been easy, eg. "Animals have 4 legs. Let's count the dog (horsey, etc.)'s legs 1,2,3,4. So does the animal sign ." We even made paper animals with bodies like the symbol and picture heads for the kids to take home.

Unfortunately, the kids are not in the same classroom, so their boards are usually used in isolation. To remedy this we are planning to start a Language Board Class for a couple hours a day, after which the children will return to their own classroom and therapy sessions.

I have also used Bliss Symbol Drawings of scenes in which new symbols are mixed with old in a stylized landscape. There is a Bliss Story book in the works to introduce new symbols to preschoolers.

I would be interested in hearing from others working with preschoolers to share ideas.

Annette S. Szymula. M.A.
Speech Pathologist
United Cerebral Palsy Association
100 Leroy Avenue
Buffalo, New York.



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 from Montreal

Exciting things are happening in Montreal. Just recently several interested centres and institutions presently using Symbols or investigating symbol usage met at MacKay Centre to form a "Co-ordinating Council" for greater Montreal. Enthusiasm was great.

The group decided to hold regular monthly meetings to disseminate information, discuss mutual problems; share experiences and relay information resources. Centres in attendance were representative of broad spectrum of paediatrics ie. education, C.P. centres, mental retardation and psychiatric facilities particularly concerned with the non-communication of the autistic child. Symbols are also being incorporated into French.

MacKay Centre for Deaf & Crippled Children will have a communication class of approximately six children with a full time teacher and hopefully additional supporting staff.

We hope that by September we will be in full swing.

Ricki Wright
Occupational Therapist
MacKay Centre for Deaf and
Crippled Children
Montreal, Quebec.

Report from the Toronto Research Team

The Symbol Communication Research program at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre is applying for continued funding from the Ministry of Education in order to proceed from the developmental to the research stage of our project.

Stage 1 which began September, 1972 and which is scheduled for completion August 1974 is considered as the developmental phase of the project with regard to symbol selection, vocabulary development, symbol instruction to 18 children, construction of prototype equipment for displaying the symbols and of interface for accessing the severely involved child to symbols, educational program planning, development of symbol teaching guidelines, and exploration of assessment procedures.

From September, 1974 to August, 1976 Stage 2 we are proposing to collect data in order to objectively compare the effect of symbol use with the effect of using other communicative aids in an educational setting. In order to be able to generalize our findings beyond the Ontario crippled Children's Centre setting, we will be recording the progress of children in other settings, using a descriptive statistic approach.

The objectives of Stage 2 include obtaining information about the effect of symbol use on the educational process as it relates to child and teacher, as well as, obtaining preliminary information about the effectiveness of assessment procedures which have been developed to assist in the matching of each child with an appropriate communication medium. This two year project will examine the following areas of development- communication, language, cognitive, social and academic- to gain information in order to meet these outlined objectives.

At the present time we are contacting other settings in order to determine those which would be interested in participat-

ing in our study.

In order to see the full perspective, Stage 3 September, 1976-August, 1977 is envisioned to utilize the findings of Stage 2 in order to develop a curriculum for symbol instruction and to refine the preliminary assessment inventory in order to define the procedures necessary for the selection of children for whom symbol instruction would be applicable.

Barbara Kates
Psychologist
Symbol Communication Research Project
C.C.C.C. Toronto.

AN ANECDOTE FROM CHESTER

One of our students at Simcoe Hall Crippled Children's Centre is at the ripe age of 13 and really beginning to indicate a marked interest in girls.

Chester has been using symbols since November '73 when some of our staff attended the excellent workshop given at C.C.C.C. He is now up to using about 150 symbols which he indicates with a head pointer.

In January '74 Chester was admitted to C.C.C.C. to have his seating evaluated and at that time was using approximately 80 symbols. Prior to that time, Chester had had frequent conversations with various staff members about a girl who he referred to as Gloria. While in C.C.C.C., Chester "dictated" a letter to Gloria, which read as follows:

1. G

Dear Gloria:

1. ♡ 12

I want you (to be here).

1. ♡ ↓ 12 □

I am sad that you are at your home and not here

1. ^ ~~one~~

I went on the bus to the store

1. ↓ ○ ~ C

I got a coke

λ T ^

Tom went

1. ^

I ate a salami sandwich



11 x 12 10+1!

I am your friend



Love, Chester

When the letter arrived, we of course set out to find the mysterious lady, hoping that she would answer Chester's letter. We called Chester's mother, and brother, We called the girl who ran a Saturday recreation program that Chester attended. We questioned all his friends, classmates and teachers. All to no avail! - Gloria could not be found. - - - - -

It was about a month later, that I mentioned to Chester that I was so sorry that we had been unable to pass his letter on. It was then that Chester laughed and pointed to a new symbol he had learned. The symbol? Make-believe!!!

Ms. Penny Parnes,
Speech Pathologist,
Simcoe Hall Crippled Children's
Centre,
Oshawa, Ontario.

Electronic and Symbol Display Revisions

In preparation for two new electronic displays which are in the advanced stages of development under Dr. Iles, the 200 and 400 symbol displays introduced earlier this year are undergoing revision.

The new 200 retains the double 10 x 10 format of the device currently in use at C.C.C.C., with a light moving across both halves simultaneously, however it will be printed on a single board with simplified electronics making for a less bulky and less expensive piece of equipment.

The larger display is intended to provide the severely involved child with a much expanded vocabulary. The "400" (16 x 25 + alphabet) display is being expanded to a 512 (16 x 32) matrix with the alphabet being incorporated along the top row. (These new dimensions allow Dr. Iles the greatest economy of design.) It will of course take longer to light up a given symbol on this larger display, however, it is hoped that the wider range of symbols will allow the child to be much more explicit without having to use so much the time-consuming procedure of combining symbols or relying on the other person's ability to make the right guess. A novel feature of the 512 will be a memory device, whereby the user can put the symbol that the light is stopped on into a coded memory, which can store a sequence of over 10 symbols. These can then be reactivated so that the symbols will light up across the display in the same order as they were entered. The child can then work independently of his teacher to prepare a full statement.

Revisions of the symbol display cover three aspects,
1. changes of symbol/or wording, 2. the addition of new symbols,
and 3. rearrangement of the symbols.

1. Changes of symbol-form. As a result of Mr. Bliss' May visit to the C.C.C.C., a few amendments are being made so that his system is more closely followed:

plaza  instead of  which would be a shopping centre.

light  "  which is strictly just "electric light".

pet  "  , Bliss' "domesticated animal".

fall  "  , with a symbol for "leaf" in place of "tree".

again  ("repeated action") instead of " " .

 will be worded "house" rather than "home".
We have agreed to adopt Mr. Bliss' suggestion that all the adjectives should be marked by his "evaluation" symbol  .

2. Additions. A number of new symbols are being introduced with the 512 display, among them:

Nouns: boy  , girl  (both of these also on the new 200);
adult  ; teenager and baby (no symbols for these as yet);

volunteer    "a person who helps freely";

foot  ; arm  ; stomach  ;

radio   ; city  (also on 200);

secret  "closed mouth" ;

Christmas    .

Verbs: buy  ; lead  ; push  ;

swallow  ; fall  .

3. Rearrangement. On both the new 200 and 512 the numerals will be moved from their present position along the top of the array to a column down the side. This together with the alphabet along the top will provide a convenient alternative code for indicating any symbol.

Following the suggestion of Judie Barlow, no blank spaces are being left in the main core of the vocabulary. The 200 will have no empty spaces. On the 512 two columns on the left hand side and three on the right will be left free of symbols, to be filled in for each child as his parent, teacher, therapist etc. sees fit.

The C.C.C.C. team is organising the symbols into more coherent semantic groups within each column. This will allow any user of the display to locate each symbol more easily. It will also offer a better arrangement for colouring.



We hope that these new displays will be a definite improvement for the more severely involved children. Due to its size and shape, the 512 may prove to be a bit awkward for the pointing child. However the new symbols can certainly be introduced to any one working with the present 400 display.

Oliver Moat
Linguist
Symbol Communication Research Team
C.C.C.C. Toronto.

An Innovative Symbol Display from Washington

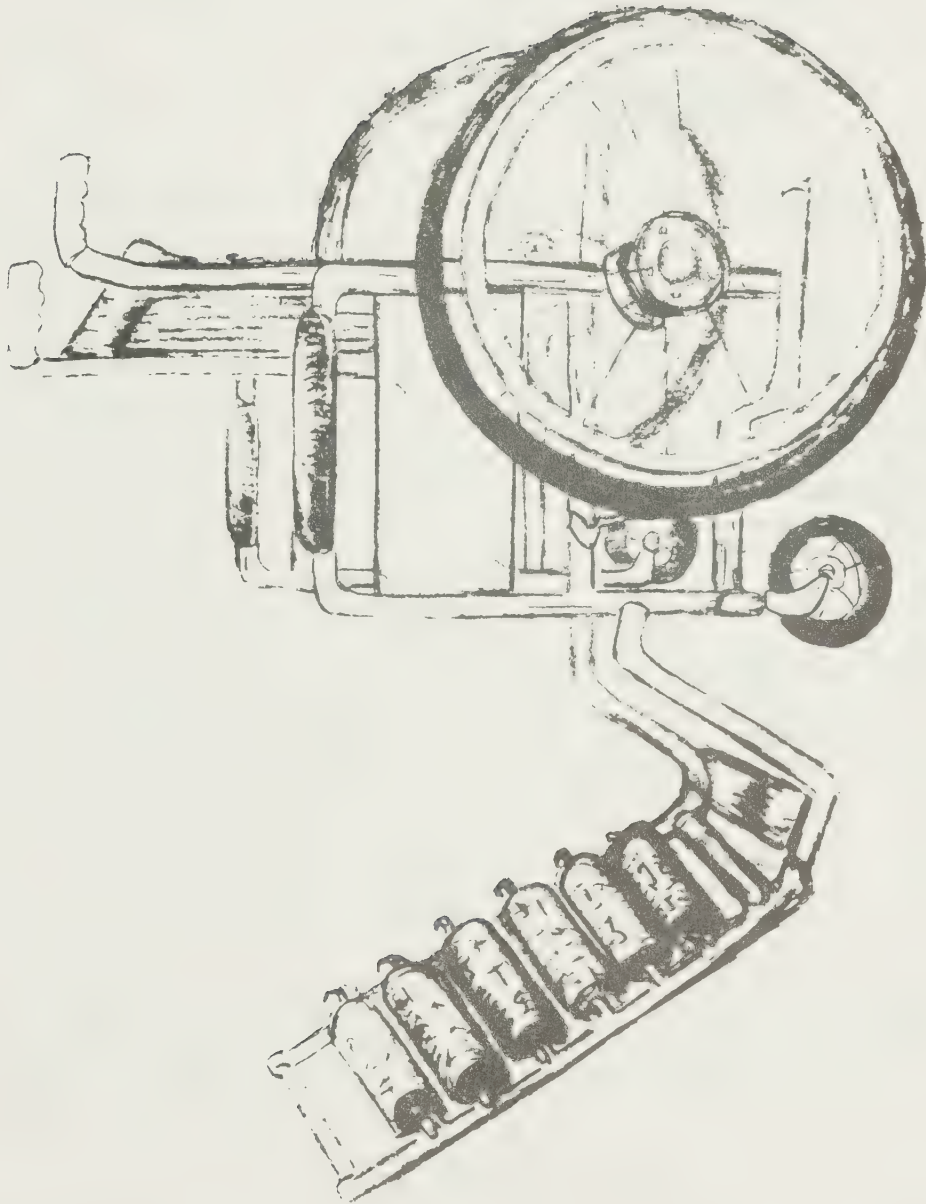
Dear Barbara,

Thank you for your note and description of the mechanical display used in your classroom. You stated that you use it with a boy who operates the display with his foot. In the last newsletter I stated that I also had a student, Alan, who has good use of his left foot, and that I was attempting to engineer some type of footboard for him. Though I would like to have an electronic display board made for him in the future, at the present time we are using a series of non-electric rollers mounted on a frame and attached to his footrests. I am enclosing a drawing of Alan's Bliss Rollers, so you might better understand what it looks like. We used rolling pins with nylon bearings (not steel ball-bearings, as nylon bearings enable the roller to hold any position. We also used 1/8" thick felt placed between roller and handle to slow the spin of the roller.). The pins are 14" long tip-to-tip, 10" long on the roller part, and have a diameter of 2 1/2". There are 6 rollers mounted on the frame, and the frame is bent at approximately a 30° angle from the vertical plane. The symbols were hand-drawn on 1/2" graph paper, mounted on the rollers and covered with clear contact paper. They are grouped as follows: Roller 1 - nouns (people and places); Roller 2 - verbs; Roller 3 - prepositions and adjectives; Roller 4 - nouns (things); Roller 5 - question, time and manner words; Roller 6 - alphabet.

This display has an advantage over the electronic display that you described, in that we are able to include 170 symbols plus the alphabet. Alan has a very limited reading and spelling vocabulary (approximately 1st grade level), after 5 years of reading training, and learning new words is a slow and difficult task for him. He easily and quickly learned the Bliss Symbols, however, and they have opened up a exciting new means of communication for him. He wears his Bliss rollers to church and elsewhere in the community, and is able to communicate with strangers, as well as those who know him. He is presently writing a story (autobiography) using the Bliss Symbols. As he gains speed in finding and pointing to the symbols and finds new ways to express his thoughts using the symbols, their use will become even more valuable.

I am also teaching the Bliss Symbols to two other teenager cerebral palsied boys in my classroom, Tim and Roger. They both have Bliss Symbol Boards attached to their armrests, with 100 symbol vocabularies mounted on the boards. Tim points to the symbols with his hand, and Roger points with his eyes. Roger is definitely a candidate for an electronic display board.





As a precise measurement of the boys' knowledge of the symbols, we take daily timed assessments of their speed in pointing to the symbols they have been introduced to. (Student points to symbol as teacher ~~says~~ says name of symbol, Symbols are given in random order.) The students are given a 5 minute practice session to warm-up, then timed for 3, 4 or 5 minutes (depending upon number of symbols and speed, should get to all the symbols known during the assessment.) A correct rate per minute (^{time}correct) and an error rate per minute (^{time}errors) is figured and graphed, and definite progress can be seen.

Rita Stilwater
Teacher
Yakima Valley School
Selah, Washington.

ON CHARLES BLISS' VISIT TO ROOM 170

In the few months that I have been volunteering at C.C.C.C., nothing has better shown me the meaning and importance of the word "communication" than my being part of the symbols project class. This became particularly true when I found out that the originator of these communications symbols, Charles Bliss, was to visit the Centre. Having never met him before, I naturally tried to imagine what he would be like. To be honest, I felt that a man of his intelligence and precise logic would seem a trifle out-of-place in the warm, happy, child-oriented atmosphere of Sherran Coyle's classroom. Yet, I somehow wasn't surprised when I caught that split-second, as his gaze fell on little Kari, whose beautiful welcoming smile and shining eyes just melted his heart. His interest and enthusiasm were genuine as Greg, Johnny, and Terry asked him symbol questions about Australia. Again and again his eyes would light up in admiration, seemingly reflecting the lights on Silvano's electric display board. Twice I saw tears in his eyes: once, as he was distributing to the children --- "his children"--- the many souvenirs of Australia he had brought along with him; and another time, in answer to a question put forth by ever-inquisitive Joey, as he recounted the history of his search to give mankind the tools for better communication.

As he left the classroom that first day, I could see that he had experienced a closeness, a bond, a real friendship with the children. In the following days this friendship was to grow--- a friendship which could be communicated without the need of a symbol board.

Daniel Madigan.

News from Kitchener

At our Centre, at present, we have only one child using symbols for communication and one child in a preparation stage of learning readiness skills. It was felt by the staff involved with these children, that it was difficult for all to keep up

to date with the progress they were making and with our methods regarding teaching and use of symbols. Consequently, a weekly "Bliss" meeting was set up, where news of progress and any difficulties were discussed among staff directly involved and those likely to be involved in the future.

In the initial stages, these meetings were found to be useful because of the many difficulties which arose, due to our lack of familiarity with the symbol system. As we became more knowledgeable, and there was less to be discussed, interest waned. It was felt that nothing significant was being accomplished by these frequent meetings. Those members directly involved, kept in close contact anyway and those more indirectly involved did not seem to be getting anything out of a meeting of this kind.

It was decided to hold a meeting for any interested staff each month to discuss one aspect of symbol communication in general. It was felt that this would be more interesting and would give a more general knowledge of symbols, what they are all about, how they are taught, and how they are used. Each meeting is chaired by one member of staff, who presents a report on a certain aspect of symbol communication, as she is involved with it. We have had reports on "teaching readiness skills", teaching of symbols", and "case studies".

Generally, the staff seem to get more out of these meetings, as they gain a better knowledge of the whole process of symbol communication.

A second aspect of staff involvement cropped up in one of our meetings. It was reported that the staff have difficulty in understanding the communications of our child actively using the symbols. She tends to point quickly and without fair knowledge of the symbols, it was found to be hard to follow what she was saying without frequent repetitions. This she was often unwilling to do. The staff also found the interpretation of some utterances difficult, due to the lack of concise sentence structure.

A suggestion was made that basic symbols and their combinations be taught to the staff. This was done by the speech therapist as follows:

Each week, a page of symbols was compiled, showing the combination of one of two basic symbols and their meanings, e.g., symbols concerning the eye - "to see", awake", "asleep" ETC. The page was posted in the staff room, and at the staff meetings copies were circulated, so that all the staff including office staff, received an individual copy. The staff enjoyed discussing the symbols and a lot of fun was had in making up messages in symbols. After several weeks, requests were received as to what type of words the staff would like to learn. Gradually, the formation of sentences, verb tenses and questions were introduced. Even though the staff are not required to learn the symbols by heart, it was found that they gained a much greater insight into what symbols meant and could guess quite accurately the meanings of new combinations.

Following a couple of months of learning symbols, a simple test was given to the staff at a staff meeting. Each member was given a simple sentence, which had to be written on the blackboard and translated. It turned out to be a joint effort, as some symbols had been forgotten, but it was a good learning experience and everyone enjoyed it. To date, the staff have learned approximately 200 symbols, at an average of 10 per week, and are probably capable of making a good guess at many more.

Not only has this exercise involved the whole staff in symbol communication and given them a good knowledge of the use of symbols, but it has given our little girl a great number of people with whom she can communicate with some degree of accuracy.

(Mrs) Jill Bechard
Speech Therapist
Rotary Children's Centre
Kitchener, Ontario.

CONSTRUCTION OF DISPLAY SURFACES

My only involvement with symbols and display boards has been with a six year old moderately to severely involved athetoid cerebral palsy girl at the Kitchener-Waterloo Rotary Childrens Centre.

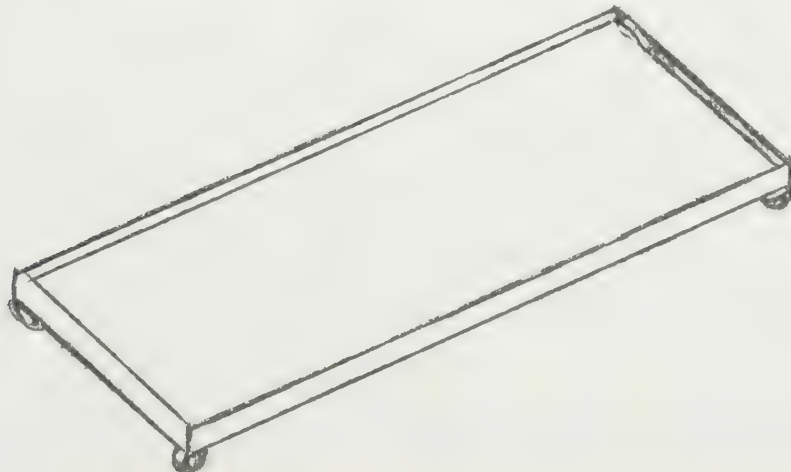
Since I am an Occupational Therapist, I have been involved in designing various means of displaying Leigh's symbols so that she is sitting in a stable position and is able to point to all parts of a 400 - display board.

When Leigh is at school she has her symbol board mounted on a wooden tray covered with plexiglass which attached to her wheelchair. Leigh can point with either index fingers to any symbol on the board when in her wheelchair, as long as she is sitting up straight in her chair. We have found that a gait strap attached to the front of her wheelchair insert (between her legs), helps her to sit up for a longer time than a seat belt around her waist.

There are times at school and at home when Leigh is playing on the floor and would like to communicate. A wooden display board on four caster wheels was designed so that her symbol board could be with her at all times (Fig. 1). Leigh uses this in kneel sitting.

Due to Leigh's poor sitting and kneeling balance it is presently very difficult for her to point accurately when in this position so this is infrequently used.

Fig. 1



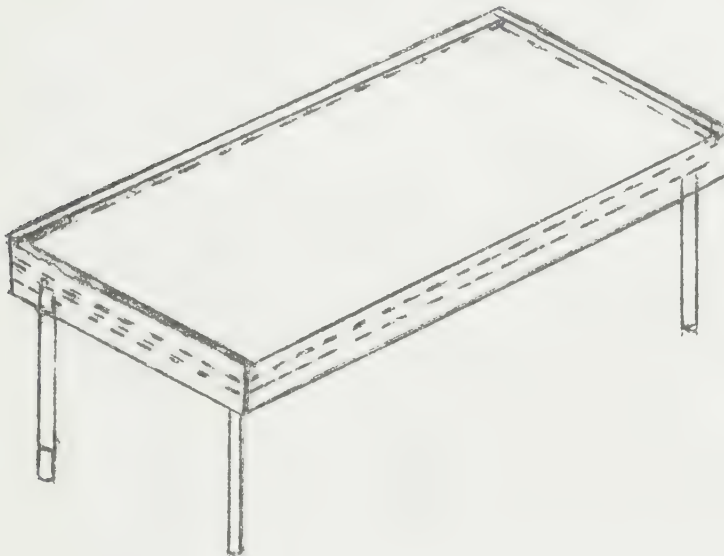
My greatest challenge was in designing a display area for Leigh's symbols when she is at home.

At present Leigh does not have a wheel chair at home and spends most of her time sitting on a bolster seat in the recreation room, sitting in an arm chair in the livingroom or playing on the floor.

By constructing a wooden board with four aprons to fit a coffee table, Leigh can now communicate while sitting on her bolster seat in the recreation room. (Fig. II). The wooden aprons are to prevent the board from sliding off the table in any direction when Leigh is communicating. The display board is covered with plexiglass so that she can also play on the table. A ledge also protrudes $3/4$ " around the perimeter so that toys would not fall off when she was playing. The coffee table was adjusted so that the working surface was a good height for Leigh when she was on the bolster seat.

Leigh really enjoys watching T.V. with her sisters and playing games now that she has a means of communicating with them while she is playing.

Fig. II



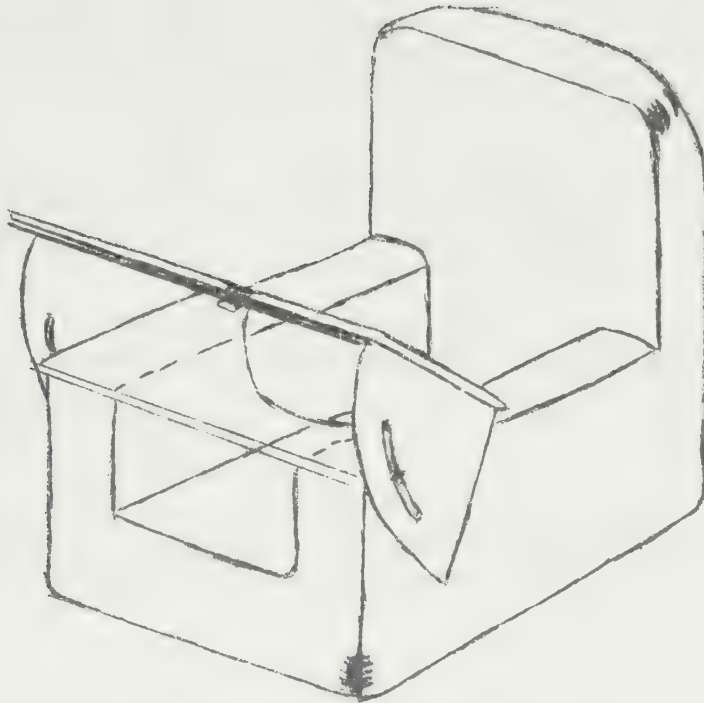
The most difficult job was designing a display surface for Leigh's symbol board which she could use sitting in her arm chair in the living room. This was very important, since she spends a lot of time in the livingroom with her family.

The final finished display surface fit over the arms of the chair, had a cut-out in the side in front of her body, so that Leigh could sit cross-legged or in long sitting. The surface for the 40 deg. symbol board could be rotated from horizontal to 60 degs. (Fig. III).

When the display surface is horizontal, Leigh cannot point to all her symbols, but when the surface is attached, she can point with little difficulty. How practical has this been?

Leigh has been using this display board on her armchair for approximately two months. She does her homework here and can communicate more adequately with the rest of the family.

Fig III



She also plays on this surface.

Designing these display surfaces has been very interesting and challenging. Slight adjustments are still being made, but now Leigh can communicate more adequately at home.

I am now thinking of how to design a collapsible display surface for use in the car. Any suggestions??

(Mrs.) Linda Schwindt
Occupational Therapist
K-R Rotary Children's Centre
Kitchener, Ont.

Hamilton's Pre-School Symbol Programme - Part 2

I think that everyone involved with symbol communication has a special interest in the development of communication boards and symbol communication with the child 5-6 years of age and under. Presently in Hamilton we have six young children who are using the symbols. They range in chronological age from 3 to 6 years, with level of function ranging from 2½ to 4 years of age.

I have not followed closely the one hundred symbol display recommended by Toronto, since many of the concepts involved with these symbols seemed too complex for a child functioning at a 2½-4 year level. Rather, I have tried to devise and anticipate a core symbol vocabulary, based on a number of factors:

- 1) the child's CA, and the child's level of function
- 2) the child's interests (which will obviously be influenced by point #1)
- 3) the child's personality
- 4) the child's home situation
- 5) the child's school situation

Obviously, while one can talk of a core symbol vocabulary, ultimately the symbols given should be meaningful to the individual child. Moreover, the vocabulary of the communication board at home may be different from that at school.

The Programme

The symbol programme for the young child is very much a two-headed programme:

- 1) providing a child with a means of communication, but also
- 2) providing the child with an ongoing language programme so he can acquire increasingly complex symbols.

In this way the young child acquiring symbols differs from the older child who may already be comprehending at a 5, 6, 7 year level and may not need a specific language programme to the same extent that a young child does.

I have tried as much as possible to anticipate what symbols will be given next, and the concepts necessary to understand these symbols. I then gear the language programme to these symbols and the concepts therein, i.e., before giving the child the symbols for food and drink, we looked at pictures of things to eat and drink, and played games to see if the child could pick out something to drink (eat) and if he/she could put all the things to eat (drink) together. If the child didn't demonstrate a differentiation of food -vs- drink, we then talked about the difference between the two (at a level appropriate to the child) i.e., we pour things to drink; they're in a cup, glass, etc. We may go to the kitchen and pour a cup of milk, a glass of juice. As well, I talk to mother and the nursery teacher about what we have done, so that they too can talk about things to eat, things to drink at home and at school. Perhaps this all sounds unnecessary. However, remember I am talking about very young children, and I think it is important to assume very little as to what they do and do not know. In fact, some of our little ones did not differentiate between food and drink when first presented with the activities described earlier.

Specifically, the following language goals have been set in anticipation of the symbols which are listed. Depending on the child's level of comprehension (as determined by formal assessment) these language goals will be pursued with greater or less complexity. Thus, for the young child

it may just be labelling the colour of objects, for older children, it may be that as well as more formal exercises. Overall goals are communicated to the mothers and teachers, with daily communication of what was done each day so it can be continued at home or in the classroom.

Language Concepts

1. Yes/No

2. Body awareness - comprehension of body parts at concrete and abstract levels.

3. Preliminary awareness and discrimination of man/woman, boy/girl. Some simple basic explanation of the distinguishing features of these people. Mommy is a woman, mommy wears a skirt, etc, a girl is a little woman, mommy is a big woman - could be provided. Lots of labelling of children at school, and pictures, as to whether they're a boy or girl.

4. Various classification tasks - things to wear, to eat, to ride in - in order to:

- a) provide more information and a higher level of understanding of objects, and
- b) in anticipation of subsequent

Symbols Anticipated

1. Symbols for yes/no - just these might be given to the very young child, 18-24 mos, who is not yet ready for symbols; and/or may not yet have the concept of communication of wants to another. For the child who seems to be ready for symbols, these given first may help to orientate the child to the board, as a means of communication.

2. Symbols for body parts - while it is acknowledged that the child cannot communicate his deepest thoughts and feelings with these particular symbols, they are given initially for a number of reasons:

- a) they are directly pictographic and most children can identify their nose, eye, etc.
- b) they introduce the idea of a symbolic picture.
- c) they provide a base from which to introduce verbs, i.e., very quickly we talk about what we do with your eye, nose, etc. "Which one do you hear with" etc.

3. Symbols for mommy/daddy. Symbol for self, since it is felt that the concepts involved with the pronouns are too difficult for this young age group.



John



Daddy



Susie
little girl

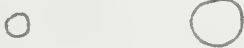
John is a little boy, daddy is a big boy

4. Symbols for various noun and verb items. People - mommy, daddy, girl, boy, teacher

- Things to do at school - painting, story, water, sand
- Things outside - grass, tree, slide, swing

display of symbols on the interface.
i.e., all the people together, all
the verbs together, etc.

5. Concept of action - talk about what child and other people are "doing", look at pictures of people doing things. Get child to perform various actions to the best of his ability.
5. Symbols for early verbs - walk, talk, see, listen, smell.
6. Emotions: talk about (at a level appropriate to the young child) and label for the child what he/she and others are feeling. Look at pictures of happy/sad, see if child can find the happy face, the sad face.
6. Symbols for happy and sad.
7. Number, colour, preposition, and size: comprehension and awareness of these concepts is necessary for a number of reasons:-
 - a) to comprehend these concepts in their own right
 - b) differentiation of a number of the symbols requires comprehension of number, size and preposition, i.e.,



mouth

sun
 - c) colour coding is used in organization and presentation of the interface.
8. Greater awareness of basic weather conditions through talking about the daily weather, looking at pictures of weather conditions.
8. Symbols for - sunny, rainy, cloudy (suggest that a line drawing of a cloud may be easier to understand at this age than the actual symbol for cloud.)

The children are not grouped together but are with speaking children placed in nursery and kindergarten groups in terms of their level of function. They attend the Centre half days 4-5 days per week. For the majority of the children, new symbols are introduced by myself in an individual session. Parents may introduce new symbols at home, that are particularly relevant to home.

Lynda Archer,
Speech Pathologist
Cerebral Palsy Centre
Hamilton, Ontario

The Young Symbol User at Home

Jason is one of the very young symbol users at the Hamilton Cerebral Palsy Centre. He first began using Bliss symbols at age 3½. This article will briefly describe how the very young child can begin to use symbols at home.

Jason was institutionalized at birth. He first came to the C. P. Centre at age two, at which time he was a small "floppy" child with no method of communicating or moving. At age 2½ he was started in a nursery group and at age 3 transferred to a group for the multiply handicapped (see article in the last newsletter.) Also at age 3, I began taking him home every weekend and holiday. He will soon be coming "home" permanently.

Before beginning symbol usage at home, we used picture cards to "talk". Jason had such limited experience that everything was an exciting experience to be "talked" about. The first trip to a supermarket was overwhelming for him - and for Dick and I when we saw how much it meant to him. We came home and prepared cards with pictures cut from magazines and catalogues - we looked at the real objects and matched them to the cards. Then we told our story - MOMMY and DADDY and JASON went in the CAR to the STORE to get BANANAS and CARROTS and MILK. Soon everything had to be told in a story.

Then Jason started to sort things into categories. We would put all the food cards in one pile, the transportation, clothes, furniture, etc, in other piles. Then came symbols. We began to match symbol cards to picture cards. The symbol cards gradually replaced pictures in our stories. At this point he was still not initiating with the symbols at home although he knew about 40 symbols.

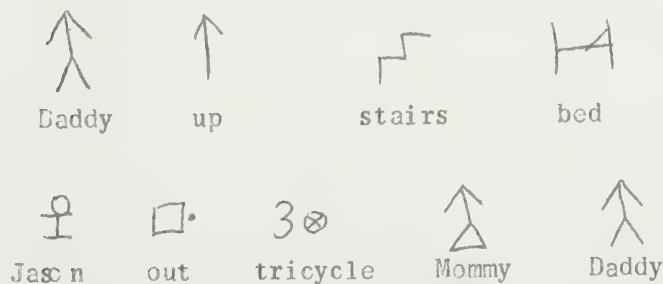
The symbols were placed on his dinner tray and he was now required to ask for  or  in order to get anything. About 20 symbols were displayed on the tray and during each meal we discussed what we had done and were going to do that day. Often the discussion was followed by "tell Daddy what we are going to do" - and Jason, by eye pointing, would repeat the story.

Jason began asking for symbols when we acquired tropical fish. He quickly indicated that he wanted a symbol for fish. Today, at age 4½, he "talks" constantly. He has a long way to go but he enjoys his symbols and is eager to learn more.

Typical things he "says" are



(Daddy and Jason are going in the car to Robert Mac Home)



(Jason is going out on his tricycle with Mommy and Daddy)

Judy Masters
O.T./P.T. and Foster Parent
Cerebral Palsy Centre, Hamilton

Symbol Pen-Pals

Among my six students is a young lady (nearly a teen) who has been using symbols for approximately 16 months. She is a bright girl who enjoys on-going relationships with adults in this Centre, but who has been placed with younger children because of her special physical needs related to symbol output. Jan is a highly involved C.P. who has experienced some classroom reading and math instruction. She types and plays an organ with a headstick.

In our setting Jan has been offered symbol instruction through use of interfaces and is now gross-pointing on a 200 display that has been marked into quadrants of nine symbols each. At this writing, she is combining eye movements and palm placement in order to express herself. This method is not rapid but can be very successful. It is dependent on the absence of pressure and upon regular reassurance that speed is not expected.

By mid-year I had begun searching for a means of motivating Jan - a reason for her here and now to master the techniques of symbol sentences patterned after English. I sensed she needed to move beyond her telegraphic style - used to express personal needs, wants and feelings. Those are naturally prime topics of conversation up for discussion when children first have a way in which to communicate. Jan has had many such things to speak of, and always will. But, I had hopes of seeing her in new situations that might spark her interests in her environment as well as in how she personally relates to it.

At that precise moment a contact was made by a teacher from a C. P. Centre in a large U.S. mid-western city. She was hoping to interest children in pen-pals. Perfect !! Jan now corresponds with a boy nearly her age who shares some, but not all, of her interests. They ask questions, send photos and exchange ideas. Indirectly their correspondence has stimulated my other students. The ramifications of such a programme seem unending. Jan and her classmates have learned about another country, another city, another C.P. Centre, another kind of postage, etc. We've had to follow the press daily to know the outcome of a recent Canadian postal strike, we've needed to verify postal rates, and we've had an opportunity to learn firsthand that someone there, who didn't know us a few months ago, but cares about us today. More than anything else, two children have come together, because of symbols, to share growing-up.

With Jan's permission, here's how it all started:

			(Marcus and I work on developing communication skills together)
---	---	---	---

lady

you

I



father



brother

(I have a father and a brother)



brother



yes

(Do you have a brother?)



sister



yes

(Do you have a sister?)



hand

(Do you use your hands?)



legs

(Do you walk?)



want



legs

(I want to walk)



mouth

(Can you talk/)



bus



school

(Do you take the bus to school/)



lady



yes

(Do you have a teacher like me?)



animal



question

(Do you have a pet?)



question to make action



see (Would you send a picture of yourself?)



Marcus Simpson



C. Harris



xx Chicago



UCP,



Barlow



CCCC, Toronto

What a marvellous idea ! I have a 12 year old boy in my class who would just love to have a pen-pal. He is a bright, intelligent lad who knows well over 100 symbols but seems disinterested in using them and rarely initiates a conversation. A pen-pal would be just the right motivation for him. Perhaps someone reading this newsletter has the same problem - maybe we could get two children together by way of symbol communication. John is particularly interested in fashion and music (rock and light classical) and has a great sense of the ridiculous. If you have a contact for John, please write to me c/o C.P. Centre, Group Box 1, Sanatorium Road, Hamilton, Ontario.

Anyone wishing a pen-pal for a symbol user, let me know and full details will be published in the next newsletter. Subscribers to this newsletter include people from Canada, U.S.A., Britain, New Zealand and Switzerland. It would be great to get some international mail going. You know Mr. Bliss originally created his symbols for the purpose of promoting international understanding. We now have the opportunity to take one small ~~step~~ in that direction.

Barbara Rush, EDITOR

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